

— Capsule Summary  
SM-555  
Frank and Frances Dent House  
Leonardtown  
Private

c. mid-1920s

The Frank and Frances Dent house, constructed in the mid-1920s, represents a significant Dutch Colonial Revival-style dwelling located near the heart of Leonardtown's commercial center. This two story, three bay, frame dwelling, erected by G. Frank and Frances Hatfield Dent, reveals how Leonardtown's residents displayed a renewed interest in regional colonial building forms in the 1920s.

— On March 26, 1925, G. Frank Dent and his wife Frances Hatfield Dent (a nurse who was originally from West Virginia) purchased a half acre property at the corner of Washington and Griswold (now Church Street) from the Vestry of St. Andrews Parish for \$1,000. The Dent family was also responsible for subdividing an adjacent parcel and building a series of three identical homes during the mid-1920s (SM-549). These three rental units represent one of the first subdivisions providing affordable housing in Leonardtown.

— The Dent house and property, called "the Southeast corner of the Vestry Lot," was encumbered by several restrictions. The 1925 deed notes that the property could not be used for any type of business and could not be occupied by a "colored" person. These restrictions represent some of the earliest attempts at zoning in Leonardtown. While it is not clear whether the town or the vestry desired these regulations, the racial composition and uses around St. Peter's Church could be manipulated and controlled using these legal devices. These land use methods, common in towns across Maryland and the entire country, were eventually superseded by Civil Rights legislation in the 1960s and 1970s.

SM-555, Frank and Frances Dent House  
St. Mary's County  
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization:	Western Shore
Chronological/Developmental Period:	Industrial Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
Historic Period Theme:	Architecture

Resource Type

Category:	Building
Historic Environment:	Town
Historic Function and Use:	Residence
Known Design Source:	None

**Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-555

Magi No.

DOE   yes   no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Frank and Frances Dent House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number NW corner of Church and Washington Streets    not for publication

city, town Leonardtown    vicinity of    congressional district 3

state Maryland    county St. Mary's

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<u>  </u> district	<u>  </u> public	<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<u>  </u> agriculture	<u>  </u> museum
<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<u>  </u> unoccupied	<u>  </u> commercial	<u>  </u> park
<u>  </u> structure	<u>  </u> both	<u>  </u> work in progress	<u>  </u> educational	<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<u>  </u> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<u>  </u> entertainment	<u>  </u> religious
<u>  </u> object	<u>  </u> in process	<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<u>  </u> government	<u>  </u> scientific
	<u>  </u> being considered	<u>  </u> yes: unrestricted	<u>  </u> industrial	<u>  </u> transportation
	<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<u>  </u> no	<u>  </u> military	<u>  </u> other:

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name David C. and Erin Gass

street & number PO Box 383    telephone no.: (301) 475-2619

city, town Leonardtown    state and zip code Md 20650

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse    liber EWA 626

street & number    folio 230

city, town Leonardtown    state Md

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title

date    federal    state    county    local

pository for survey records

city, town    state

## 7. Description

Survey No. SM-555

### Condition

☒ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Contributing Resource Count: 2

The Frank and Frances Dent house is located at the northwest corner of Washington and Church Streets in Leonardtown, Maryland. The 0.4 acre lot is bounded to the south and east by a picket fence interrupted on the east side by a pair of squat, brick columns topped with round ornaments. Between these columns is a swinging gate that permits entry towards the primary elevation of the house. To the west, the dwelling is bounded by a one story frame house and to the north is a two story, frame building once associated with nearby St. Peter's Chapel (SM-275).

Constructed in the 1920s, the frame, two story, three bay Dutch Colonial Revival style dwelling exhibits a gambrel roof with a large shed dormer that nearly extends the entire width of the roof. While the foundation is obscured, the exterior walls are covered with aluminum siding. The roof is covered with raised seam metal and is pierced by two, exterior end, brick chimneys. The house also exhibits a shed roof addition on the north gable-end elevation and a screened-in porch with a nearly flat roof supported by a pair of slender Tuscan columns on the south side. These columns support a horizontal beam that is cantilevered beyond the length of the porch. The ends of the beam are then diagonally cut--a similar detail found on the porches of Dent's Subdivision as well (SM-549). This porch is also shaded by a series of aluminum awnings.

The primary or east elevation is distinguished by its three symmetrically placed bays. A centrally located, twelve light and wood panel door is flanked on either side by paired one-over-one, double-hung sash windows. Directly above these bays are three symmetrically placed one-over-one windows. These bays are all part of a shed dormer that runs almost continuously across the entire roof line. A small section of roof separates the dormer in order to create the distinctive gambrel roof outline on each of the gable ends.

A one-and-a-half story garage is also located in the northwest corner of the property. Oriented on a north-south axis, this frame building with a roughly rectangular shape and attenuated elevation features a tilted-square window that lights the half story above the garage. According to Ed Stockel, a local historian, this garage was also used as an apartment at one time.

## 8. Significance

Survey No. SM-555

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

### Specific dates

### Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Frank and Frances Dent house, constructed in the mid-1920s, represents a significant Dutch Colonial Revival-style dwelling located near the heart of Leonardtown's commercial center. Erected by G. Frank and Frances Hatfield Dent, the house illustrates how Leonardtown's residents subscribed to a renewed interest in regional colonial building forms in the 1920s.

On March 26, 1925, G. Frank Dent and his wife Frances Hatfield Dent (a nurse who was originally from West Virginia) purchased a half acre property at the corner of Washington and Griswold (now Church Street) from the Vestry of St. Andrews Parish for \$1,000. The Dent family was eventually responsible for subdividing an adjacent property and building a series of three identical homes during the mid-1920s (SM-549).

The Dent property, called "the Southeast corner of the Vestry Lot," was encumbered by several restrictions. The 1925 deed notes that the property could not be used for business and could not be occupied by a "colored" person. These restrictions represent some of the earliest attempts at zoning in Leonardtown. While it is not clear whether the town or the vestry desired these encumbrances, the racial composition and uses of the property around St. Peter's Church could be manipulated and controlled. These land use restrictions, common in towns across Maryland and the entire country were eventually superseded by Civil Rights legislation in the 1960s and 1970s.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM-555

Interview with Ed Stokel. January, 1997.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 0.5 acresQuadrangle name LeonardtownQuadrangle scale 1:24 000UTM References do NOT complete UTM referencesA 

Zone	Easting	Northing							

B 

Zone	Easting	Northing							

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Same as per deed description.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk E. Ranzetta, Historic Sites Surveyororganization St. Mary's County Planning and Zoningdate February 1997street & number 22740 Washington Streettelephone (301) 475-4662city or town Leonardtownstate MD

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DHCP/DHCD  
100 COMMUNITY PLACE  
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-20  
514-7600

SM-555, Frank and Frances Dent House  
St. Mary's County  
8.1 Significance

Chain-of-title (Please note that all records can be found in the Land Records Office, St. Mary's County Courthouse in Leonardtown, Maryland unless otherwise noted.)

Reference: Liber EWA 626, Folio 230

Grantee: David C. and Erin K. Gass

Grantor: Richard C. Shoemaker

Date: October 21, 1991

Notes: This deed notes a plat in liber MRB 24, Folio 77. The Gass' purchased the property for \$95,000.

Reference: Liber MRB 249, Folio 463

Grantee: Ellen Jo Shoemaker

Grantor: The Vestry of St. Peter's Chapel, St. Andrews Parish

Date: February 13, 1986

Notes: The deed lists the property as Lot #2 of St. Peter's Subdivision. It was purchased for \$65,000.

Reference: Liber MRB 62, Folio 189

Grantee: The Vestry of St. Peter's Chapel, St. Andrews Parish

Grantor: Robert M. McKinney, personal representative of Frances Hatfield Dent's estate

Date: December 31, 1979

Reference: Liber CBG 13, Folio 418

Grantee: G. Frank and Frances Hatfield Dent

Grantor: William G. and Violet M. Fenwick

Date: June 12, 1942

Reference: Liber CBG 13, Folio 416

Grantee: William G. and Violet M. Fenwick

Grantor: G. Frank and Frances Hatfield Dent

Date: June 12, 1942

Reference: Liber JMM 3, Folio 70

Grantee: G. Frank Dent

Grantor: Vestry of St. Andrews Parish

Date: March 26, 1925

Notes: As the SE corner of the subdivided Vestry lot, this 47/100 acre lot was purchased for \$1000 by the Dent's. The deed also contains a restrictive covenant that banned "colored persons" and business uses. Charles W. Heard surveyed a plat of the property on February 20, 1925, but it could not be found.

Reference: Liber EBA 6, Folio 357

Grantee: Vestry of St. Andrew's Parish

Grantor: Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Washington

Date: April 29, 1907

— SM-555, Frank and Frances Dent House  
St. Mary's County  
8.2 Significance

Reference: Liber EBA 4, Folio 328  
Grantee: Vestry of St. Andrew's Parish  
Grantor: Asa A. and Anna G. Lawrence  
Date: February 6, 1905

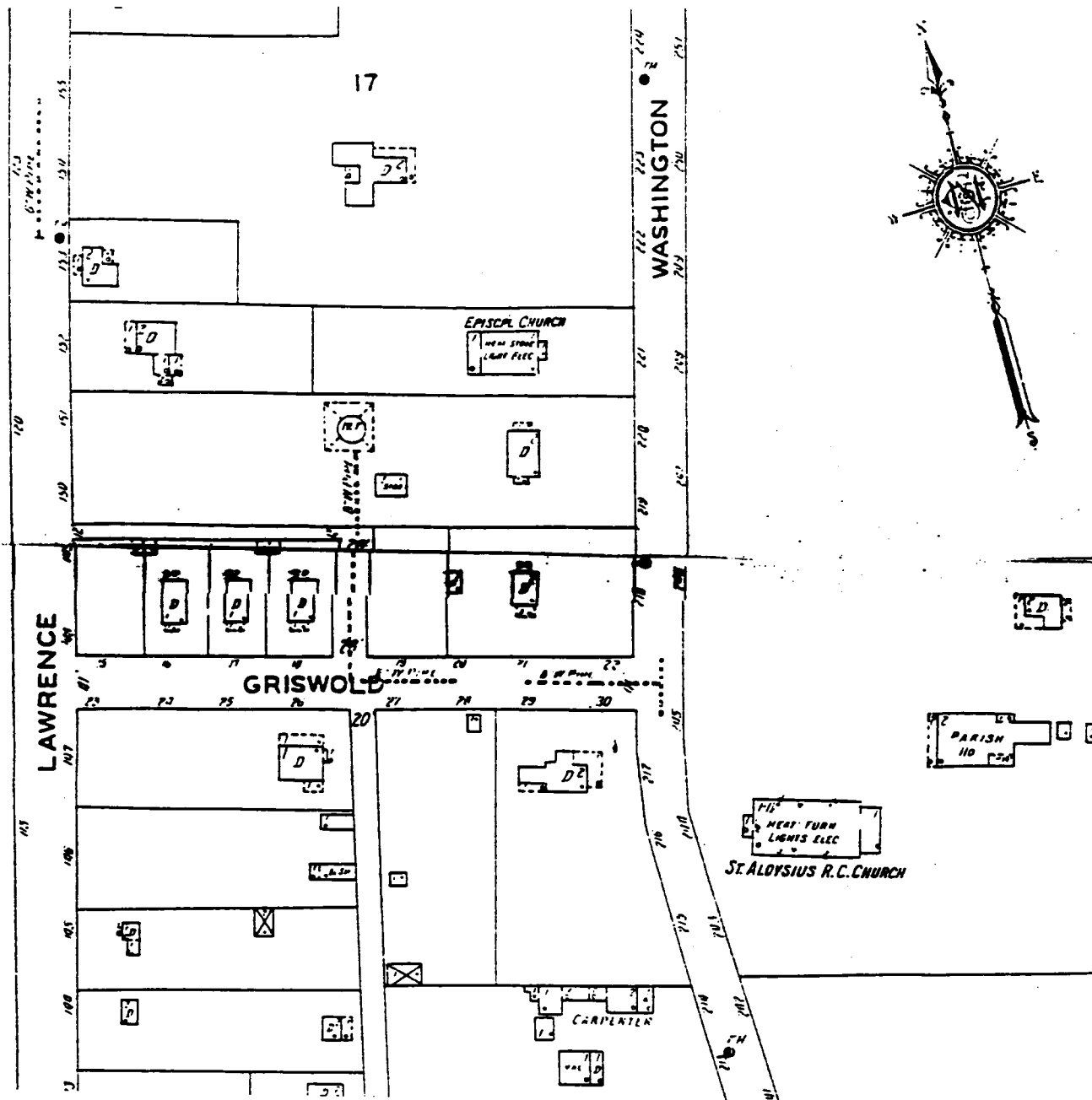
Reference: Liber JJG 2, Folio 101 (Mortgage)  
Grantee: Asa A. Lawrence  
Grantor: James A. Gary  
Date: July 2, 1894  
Note: This property just one of seven pieces of property mortgaged.

Reference: Liber JFF 4, Folio 361  
Grantee: Asa A. Lawrence  
Grantor: Joseph H. Key and Robert C. Combs  
Date: December 23, 1880  
Note: In this confirmatory deed, Lawrence is given official ownership of the land. Apparently Maria Key sold Lawrence the land without initiating a deed. Joseph Key and Robert Combs confirm the validity of this sale through this instrument.

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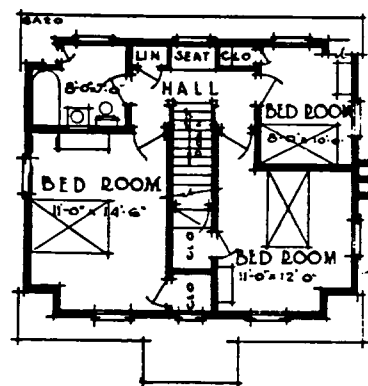
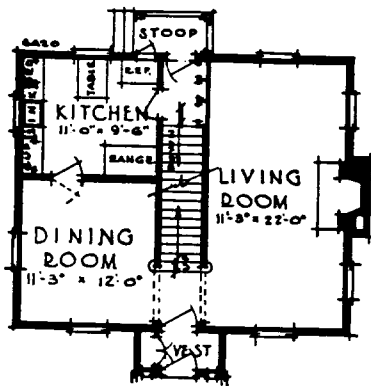
SM-555, Frank and Frances Dent House  
St. Mary's County  
8.3 Significance



1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map of Leonardtown showing the Dent house located at the Northwest corner of Griswold and Washington Streets. Note its proximity to the three rental properties that the Dent family built in the 1920s (See also SM-549).

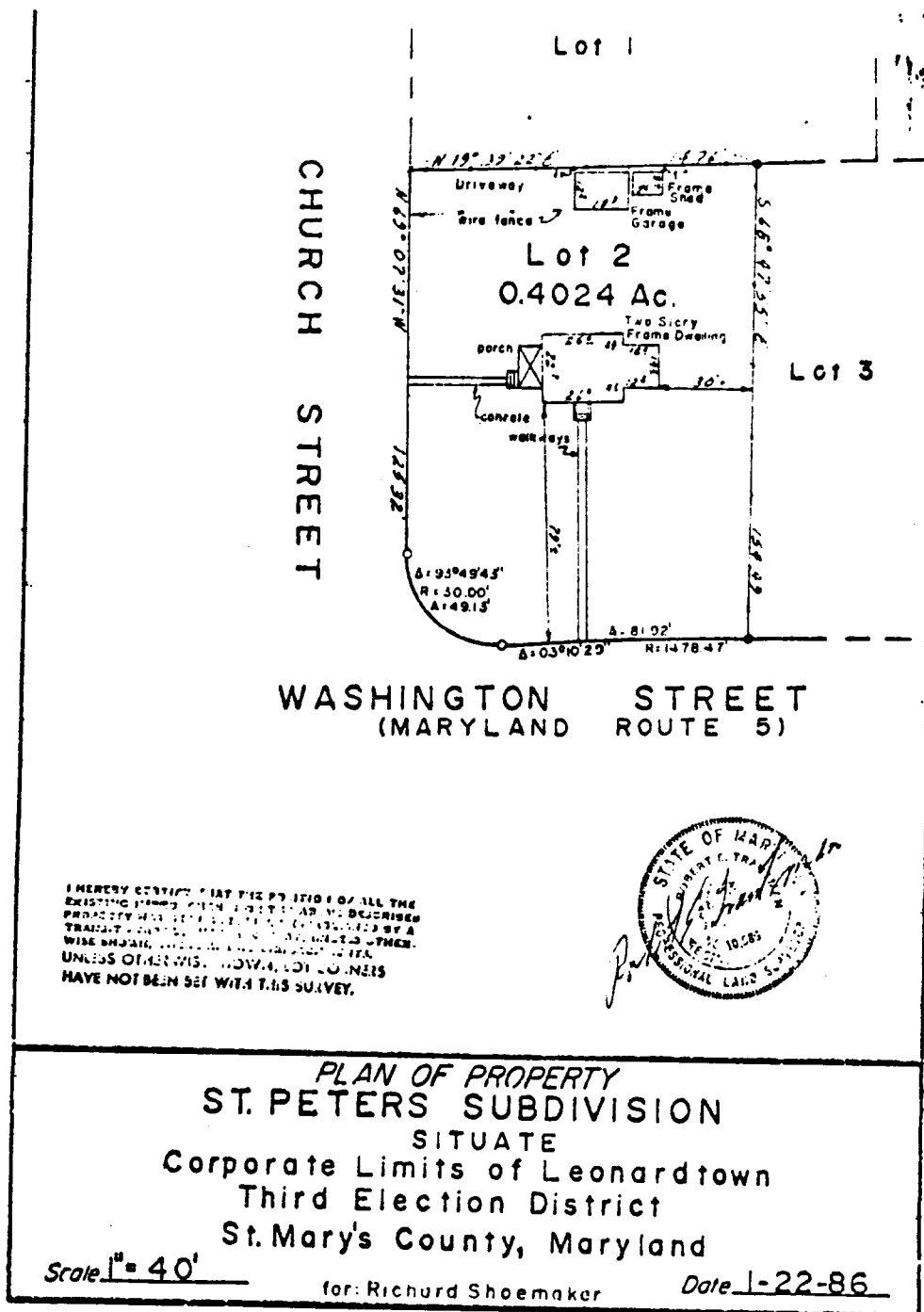
SM-555, Frank and Frances Dent House  
St. Mary's County  
8.4 Significance

SMALL HOMES OF DISTINCTION

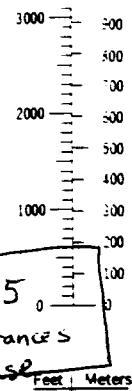
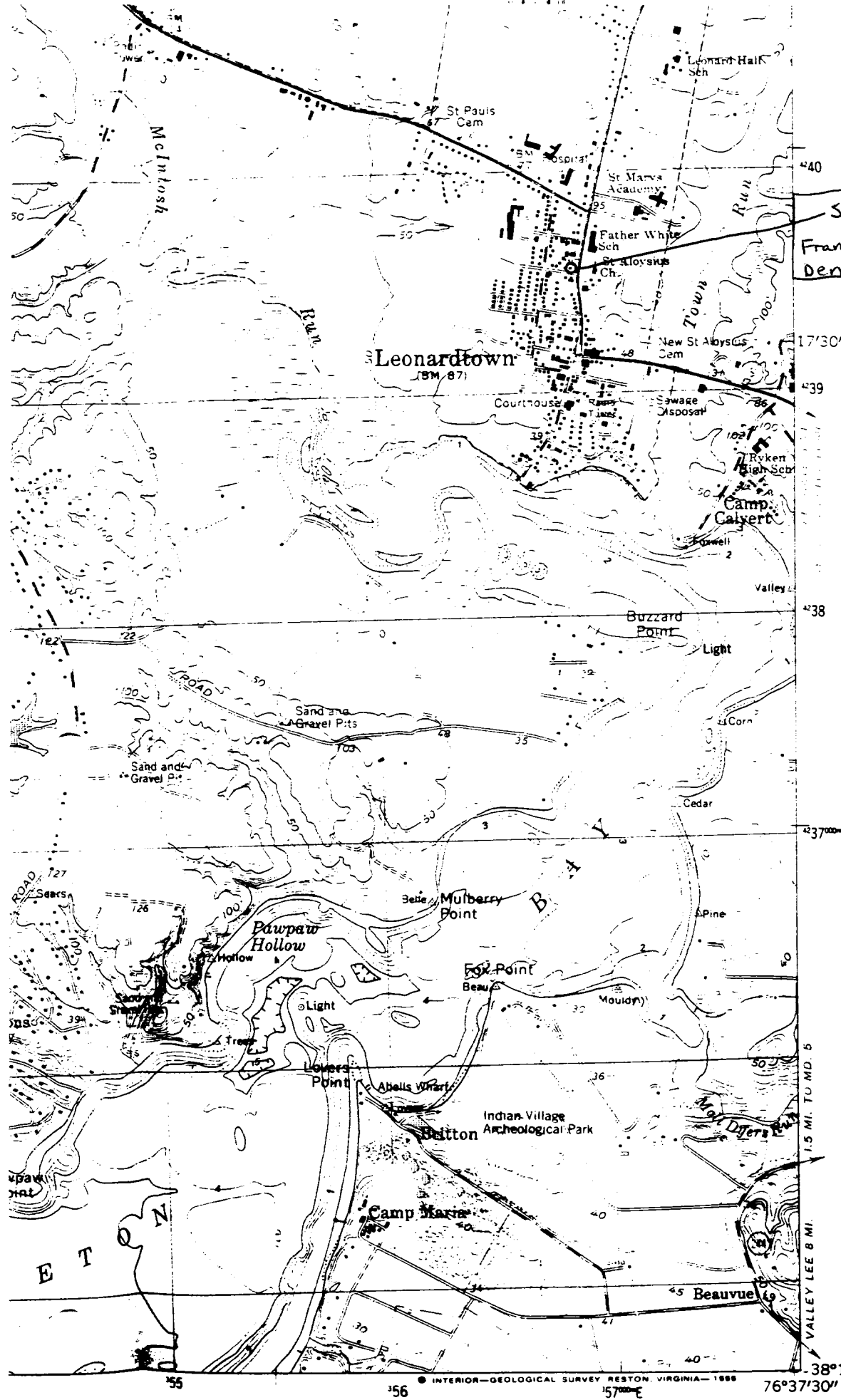


Similar to the Dent House, this Dutch Colonial Revival home appeared in a book entitled Authentic Small Houses of the Twenties: Illustrations and Floor Plans of 254 Characteristic Homes edited by Robert T. Jones in 1929. Publications such as this acquainted interested readers with an array of house styles and plans popular during the 1920s. These houses revealed a renewed interest in regional colonial building forms. As the Dent house illustrates, Leonardtown's residents found these new designs economically and aesthetically viable.

SM-555, Frank and Frances Dent House  
 St. Mary's County  
 8.5 Significance



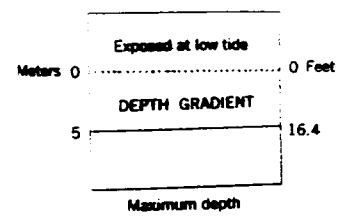
Plat of the Dent House completed January 22, 1986 for Richard Shoemaker.



SM-555  
Frank + Frances  
Dent House

Feet	Meters
1	3048
2	5096
3	9144
4	12192
5	15240
6	18288
7	21336
8	24384
9	27432
10	30480

To convert feet to meters  
multiply by .3048  
To convert meters to feet  
multiply by 3.2808



LEONARDTOWN, MD.  
SW/4 LEONARDTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE  
38076-C6-TB-024

1963  
BATHYMETRY ADDED 1982  
PHOTOREVISED 1984  
DMA 5660 I SW SERIES V833

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty Light-duty

(PIN-Y POINT  
5660 II NF



